

## Judge throws party, sends man to prison for life

Associated Press

DALLAS -- Amid a party atmosphere that included balloons, streamers and a cake, a judge welcomed a fugitive back to her court on Monday before pronouncing his life sentence.

"You just made my day when I heard you had finally come home," Criminal Courts Judge Faith Johnson told Billy Wayne Williams, who was captured Thursday after nearly a year on the run.

Johnson sentenced Williams to life in prison for aggravated assault.

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"It seems like everyone wants to have a party, and it's fun for you people, but not for me," Williams told Dallas-Fort Worth television station KDFW as he was led away in handcuffs. He was being held Monday night in the Lew Sterrett Justice Center in Dallas.

Williams, accused of choking his girlfriend until she was unconscious, failed to appear for his November trial and was convicted and sentenced in absentia.

Williams, 53, whose previous convictions include murder, was arrested last week in Arlington by a fugitive task force. His criminal record dates to the 1980s. He escaped from prison in 1985, according to a release from the U.S. Marshals Service.

Williams has used disguises, posed as an attorney and used aliases such as "Justin Burroughs" and "Bubba Lee Williams," authorities said.

Before he was brought into the courtroom on Monday, Johnson directed gleeful courtroom staff members as they placed balloons and streamers around the courtroom. A colorful cake was decorated with "Welcome Home Billy Ray Williams."

"We're so excited to see you, we're throwing a party for you," Johnson told the fugitive.